

Camaraderie Thrives at Haymarket Center

You can do it! For the women participating in the Chenny Troupe program at the Maternal Addiction Center (MAC) at Haymarket Center, this statement reflects the way they come together to encourage and support one another in the program. MAC was established in 1990 to create a positive environment for adjudicated pregnant women to conquer their addictions. Women reside at Haymarket as an alternative to serving jail time while they are pregnant. As part of their residency, the women receive counseling and treatment for substance abuse and learn parenting skills. The main goals are to help the women raise healthy children and remain drug-free.

Chenny Troupers began working at the Haymarket Center last spring in a pilot program. It didn't take long before everyone knew that it was a great fit for us. The program is based on Chenny Troupe's award winning curriculum (Amoco Leader Award in 1998) for use in a residential substance abuse rehabilitation setting. In a typical Chenny Troupe program session at Haymarket, there are between 7 and 10 women participating, along with a thera-

pist and volunteer teams. The first session involves some basic dog handling and rules about behavior when working with the dogs. The following sessions begin with a group discussion, as the women review what they learned in the prior session. The program leader then introduces the topic of the current session (such as how to groom a dog, how to select a dog, or whether dogs will become mean). After the introduction, the program leader asks one of the volunteer teams to demonstrate the session activity (such as heeling with the dog on a loose lead or instructing the dog to jump hurdles). The women then take turns practicing the activities and providing positive feedback to one another. Generally, two women share a dog during the practice session, and must learn to work cooperatively, an important social skill. At the end of the dog workout, the group has a reflection session in which the women talk about what they have learned.

The range of topics discussed in the sessions are aimed at helping the women transfer the knowledge and skills that they gain in the program to what they can expect to experience as future parents. For

example, the women learn how tone of voice and body language affect communication, what constitutes abuse and how to prevent it, and how to care for and respect another living thing – one that may not communicate exactly as they do. They also learn the importance of responsibility, commitment and positive reinforcement. At the end of the 6-week session, the women participate in a graduation ceremony where they demonstrate some of the skills they have learned while working with the dogs and receive a certificate of completion. For many of the women in the program, this might be their first diploma.

Through the dedication and hard work of the women and the Chenny Troupe volunteer teams, as well as the insight and leadership of program leader John Himmel, the program at Haymarket continues to be a great success. As the women work with the dogs, encouragement, support, and positive reinforcement begin to characterize the group. The Chenny Troupe program helps to put the women on a path toward a brighter future and better parenting.

Dogs Span all Cultures at Swedish Covenant

Last spring, Chenny Troupe volunteers participated in a 6-week pilot program at Swedish Covenant Hospital. After they had an opportunity to observe our dogs and volunteers, the hospital administration and staff were very excited about our program and couldn't wait for us to begin our program after the summer break. The feeling was mutual. The program is now a part of Chenny Troupe's program inventory. Tim Nelson, Public Relations Manager at Swedish and a member of its Pet Action Team, introduced me to their patient philosophy.

Swedish Covenant is a member of the Planetree Alliance of health care providers,

an international organization with more than 100 affiliates committed to putting the patient first. This means recognizing the patient as a whole person, not just a sick or recuperating person. The hospital tries to make the patients more comfortable during their hospital stay by providing activities that distract patients from their illness and help to stimulate the recuperation process. The core components of the program include providing art and architectural stimuli, aromatherapy, baking and horticulture opportunities, and allowing dogs into the common areas of the facility. The Chenny Troupe program falls within the Planetree initiative.

I asked Tim if all the Planetree hospitals use animal-assisted therapy. He explained that some others have incorporated pet visitation, but those programs do not involve the medical professional or trained volunteers. Swedish Covenant is one of the only hospitals in the Planetree Alliance that uses dogs in a therapeutic manner, providing actual measurable benefits to the patients. Tim remarked that the Chenny Troupe volunteers are very pleasant and easy to work with, and the dogs are extremely well behaved.

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Kibbles and Bits

Congratulations to our newest Chenny Troupers! In August, we welcomed three new teams to our ranks. **Birgit Mantilla** and **Spike**, an English Mastiff are busy working at Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital as well as lending a helping paw at Somerset Place. **Ronnie Richardson Sprunger** and **Eyren**, an Australian Cattle Dog mix are working at Rice Child and Family Center. We also welcome back **Mary Kay Carter** and her Springer spaniel, **Lily**, who are working at Haymarket Center. In October, we welcomed three more teams: **Jennifer Brush** and her pug, **Tobie**, **Debra Hadelman** and her yellow lab, **Daffie** and **Kathy Zettek**



August Testers – Ronnie Richardson Sprunger and Eyren, and Birgit Mantilla and Spike.

and **Spencer**, her Bernese Mountain dog. We are delighted to have all of you!

We also welcome new volunteers **Jacinda Bauman**, **Eowyn Ford**, **Lucy Greenslade**, **Margot** and **Jim Igoe**, **Sarah Poeppel**, and **Chris Robb**. **Lucy** is working at Schwab, **Sarah** is working at Swedish Covenant and **Eowyn** is working at Haymarket. **Margot** and **Jim** have been a part of the “crowd” at testing, and the others are observing programs.



October Testers – Spencer (alone), Debra Hadelman and Daffie and Jen Brush and Tobie.

Our wonderful volunteers again braved the cold and damp to tell the world about Chenny Troupe at PAWS Chicago Run For Their Lives on Sunday October 1st. Special thanks to **Caryl** and **Jerry Horn**, **Linda Carr** and **Toby** and **Sarah Stewart**, **Jim Cuno** and **Gus** for their efforts on our behalf.

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TroupeTalk

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Donations

Donations in memory of, or in honor of, a special pet or person are always welcome and help us continue to provide our programs free of charge. We even have birthday cards for your canine friend's special day!

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

In memory of “Mr. Jimmy” Jackson and “Piper” Peterson by Gwen Lincoln.

In honor of Ann Rohlen by Harriett Weatherford and Tom Schaeffes

In memory of “Rosie” Blair by Dr. John Kasmersky and Broadway Animal Hospital

In honor of Victoria Anderson and in memory of “Nancy” by Pivot Point International.

In memory of “Cassie” Sethness by Jane Perisho.

In memory of “Porsche” Gilloon by Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Schuler

In memory of “Shadow” Rosenmutter and in honor of “Sunny” by Mr. and Mrs. Skip Rosenmutter

In memory of “AJ” Hansen by Linda and Phil Abrahams.

In honor of Marge Hannigan and in memory of “KD”, by Joanne Banovitz

In memory of “Sampson” and “Simba” Golden by Mr. and Mrs. James Deuble and Mrs. and Mrs. Michael Golden.

In memory of “Zack” Young by Mr. and Mrs. James Deuble

In memory of “Jordan” Gasper by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Gasper and Janet Eaton

In memory of “Bentley” Crawford by Mr. Robert Kallman

What Brought You to Chenny Troupe?

This is the first in a series of articles highlighting our volunteers and how they came to be Chenny Troupers.

Ronnie Sprunger and Eyren

Ronnie Sprunger's Australian shepherd/cattle dog mix, Eyren, passed the Chenny Troupe test in August 2006.

Ronnie and Eyren were working toward earning Eyren's Canine Good Citizenship certification, and their instructor told them various ways they could volunteer together. Ronnie had originally been thinking about visiting nursing homes, but when she discovered Chenny Troupe, she knew that it was what she and Eyren wanted to do. They are now volunteering at the Rice Center program, with three other volunteer teams and four kids.

Eyren is much like the children at the Rice Center. She had been abused and neglected. When Ronnie first met her in the Fort Wayne pound, she was close to death. She had heartworm, tapeworm, seizures, and was full of buckshot. Eyren's ears were scarred from insect bites and her tail half as long as it should be—who knows if it was docked or injured. She also showed signs of having been beaten. Ronnie did not know all this at the time. All that Ronnie knew was that Eyren needed love and a good home. Ronnie and Eyren were at the vet every week for 3 months.

And yet, in spite of her sad past, Eyren loves everybody. When she is around puppies she disciplines them like a real mom dog. At the dog play lot, she will run up to people to see if they want to pet her. And she is very devoted to Ronnie.

Eyren is named for Jane Eyre, who also suffered an abusive, unhappy childhood, but eventually found happiness and love.

When Ronnie tells the kids at Rice about Eyren's story, they often identify with her. One boy said, "Yeah, that's like me." Eyren loves to go to Rice. She loves the attention and the interaction with the kids and the kids love working with a dog who is so much like them. Ronnie is thrilled to see the love that Eyren gives, and receives.

Ronnie's experience with Eyren has changed the course of her life, too. Currently an OR nurse at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and as well as a volunteer with Chenny Troupe and the Anti-Cruelty Society, Ronnie has overcome her childhood trauma of having been bitten in the face by the family chow and hopes to become a vet so that she can continue to bring her healing touch to animals.

Teri and Mike Steichen and Lucky and Bogey

Teri and Mike Steichen's English golden retrievers, Lucky and Bogey, passed the Chenny test in January 2006. Teri knew that she wanted to be involved in volunteer work with her dog from personal experience. When her son, Tommy, was in a serious accident, therapy dogs visited him in the hospital during his recuperation. In the ICU, when he could not talk, Tommy wrote the word "puppy" on a note and gave it to Teri with a smile. Teri saw firsthand the healing effect that dogs have. When Tommy came home, she got Lucky, who lay on the bed with Tommy to keep him company. As he got better, Tommy spent his free time taking Lucky to training classes.

When Teri married Mike (Bogey was Mike's dog, and Lucky's brother) and they moved from Ann Arbor to Chicago, Lucky already had his Canine Good Citizenship certification.

Luckily for Teri, her husband's business partner was married to a friend of Nancy and Mike Golden, long time Chenny Troupe volunteers (and Nancy is the program leader at Lutheran General). So Teri was immediately in contact with Nancy and signed up for the test. Both dogs passed on their first try!

The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago seemed a perfect match for this family. It was a great experience for all five of them - Teri, Mike, Tommy, and the two dogs, but then the chance to volunteer closer to home was too enticing. Now Teri and Lucky volunteer at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital Children's Hospital with very young children who come for weekly therapy. The children need speech, occupational and physical therapy.

Four handlers and their dogs spend two hours at the hospital. The therapists work individually with the children and volunteer teams, and the parents join in. The dogs are a good focal point for the families; the parents and children talk about them during the session and at home. Each child works with a dog for 15 minutes and then switches to another dog for 15 minutes. Other staff members often stop in to watch the interaction.

Teri doesn't see the type of immediate improvement she had seen at RIC, but she does see changes in both the children and the parents, and she knows that she and Lucky are helping. She has also seen her dog's growth in this program. At first Lucky was not sure how to relate to the autistic children, but now he understands them and is comfortable. So when it is time to put on his Chenny vest and go to work, he is ready and eager to do his part.

Eileen Fitzsimons

Dogs Span all Cultures at Swedish Covenant, cont.

Tim also mentioned that Swedish Covenant is located in one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse areas of the city and that diversity is reflected in its staff as well as its patient base, with an

estimated 50 languages spoken at the facility. He added that "Dogs span all cultures". At Swedish Covenant, a diverse group of Chenny Troupe dogs works with patients who are undergoing rehabilitation after

surgeries, strokes or other catastrophic occurrences.

Patty Oakley

(with information provided by Tim Nelson)

Kibbles and Bits, cont.

Don't miss **Santa Gus** and his Chenny Troupe friends at the Chicago Botanic Garden's annual Reindog Parade on Sunday, December 2nd beginning at 11 a.m. Visit the garden's website at chicagobotanic.org for more information and to register your dog. It is the only day dogs can visit the gardens.



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Max, one of the Heeling Hearts dogs

ent will get a picture of the dog you've chosen, along with letters from the dog, sharing some of the poignant stories from the program he or she works in. Your friends and family will be delighted with their new, low maintenance pet and honored by your thoughtfulness. Questions? Can't find the brochure under all those holiday catalogues? Call the office at 773-404-6467.

Chenny Troupe has opened a new daytime program at Advocate Lutheran General Children's Hospital in Park Ridge. Volunteer teams provide animal assisted therapy within the outpatient pediatric therapy services, working one-on-one with very young children (between ages 3 and 7) and their therapists during regularly scheduled visits. In this exciting new program, the therapist works directly with the volunteer to identify goals within the speech, occupational and/or physical therapies for each young client. Parents, children, therapists and volunteers all agree that this program is off to a fabulous start!!



Sadie, Zak and Lucky celebrate Halloween at Lutheran General

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